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Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments

Status of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Mandate of the Fund

1. As established under General Assembly resolution 46/122 of 17 December 1991, the mandate of the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery is to assist representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), from different regions, dealing with issues of contemporary forms of slavery to participate in the deliberations of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery by providing them with financial assistance; and to extend, through established channels of assistance, humanitarian, legal and financial aid to individuals whose human rights have been violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. Funding is obtained by means of voluntary contributions from Governments, NGOs and other private or public entities.

II. Beneficiaries

2. In accordance with resolution 46/122, the beneficiaries of assistance from the Fund shall be: (a) representatives of NGOs dealing with issues of contemporary forms of slavery, who are so considered by the Board of Trustees, who would not, in the opinion of the Board, be able to attend the session of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery without the assistance provided by the Fund and who would be able to contribute to a deeper knowledge on the part of the Working Group of the problems relating to contemporary forms of slavery; as well as (b) individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery and who are so considered by the Board of Trustees.

III. Administration and Board of Trustees

3. The Fund is administered, in accordance with the financial regulations and rules of the United Nations and other relevant provisions, by the Secretary-General, with the advice of a Board of Trustees. The Board is composed of five persons with relevant experience in the field of human rights and, in particular, with issues of contemporary forms of slavery, serving in their personal capacity, as United Nations experts. The members of the Board are appointed by the Secretary-General for a three-year renewable term, in consultation with the current Chairman of the

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Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, with due regard to equitable geographical distribution.

4. The five members who have recently been renewed or appointed by the Secretary-General are: Swami Agnivesh (Chairman; India), Theo van Boven (the Netherlands), Cheikh Saad-Bouh Kamara (Mauritania), Tatiana Matveeva (Russian Federation) and José de Souza Martins (Brazil).

5. As a principle, provided that enough money is available to allocate project and travel grants, the Board recommended that it should meet every year, if possible at the end of February, in order to be able to meet with donors. The Chairman or a member of the Board should be given an opportunity by the Bureau to deliver a brief speech to the Commission on Human Rights, under the relevant agenda item, in order to inform the Commission about its work and the financial situation of the Fund and to introduce the relevant note in the Fund by the secretariat to the Commission.

6. Since its third session in March 1997, the voluntary contributions paid to the Fund have not been sufficient to allow the Board to meet and the fourth session had to be postponed to 1999.[1] However, members continued to implement their mandate, including by raising funds.

7. In its resolution 1998/20, of 21 August 1998, on the Fund, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, *inter alia*, expressed its concern at the insufficiency of contributions to the Fund, which prevented it from effectively fulfilling its mandate. It expressed its support for the work of the members of the Board, in particular their fund-raising activities, and invited the members in a position to do so to participate at the twenty-fourth session of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

IV. Fourth session of the Board of Trustees

8. At the end of 1998 and early 1999, a sufficient number of voluntary contributions had been received from donors (see table 1 below) to allow the Board members to hold a fourth session in March 1999 and to adopt recommendations on travel grants (to be paid before the session of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, beginning on 23 June 1999) and project grants.

9. The fourth session of the Board was held from 24 to 26 March 1999 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. All members attended. Swami Agnivesh was elected Chairperson for the term.

10. During its six meetings, the Board of Trustees examined information prepared by its secretariat concerning new applications for grants, the financial situation of the Fund, developments concerning the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery and implementation by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of the Board's recommendations approved at its third session in 1997.[2] The Board also met with donors, as well as with the representatives of two specialized NGOs: Anti-Slavery International (London) and the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (Tokyo).

11. The Board examined 41 requests for travel grants, amounting to US$ 127,547 and 24 requests for project grants amounting to $777,374, applications for which had been received before the deadline of 15 January 1999. In the light of its established criteria of selection, the Board of Trustees recommended 10 travel grants, amounting to $13,505, to enable representatives of NGOs to participate, during three working days, in the deliberations of the twenty-fourth session of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (23 June to 2 July 1999), and five project grants amounting to $27,000.[3]

12. As a follow-up to the receipt of new contributions, two travel grants recommended by the Board at its third session in 1997 were paid on 24 March 1999 to two representatives of NGOs that had been kept on a contingency list until sufficient contributions were paid.[4]

V. Approval of recommendations and implementation

13. All of the recommendations made by the Board of Trustees at its fourth session were approved by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on behalf of the Secretary-General on 19 April 1999 and the project and travel grants have already been paid.

Table 1
Contributions available for the fourth session of the Board of Trustees in March 1999
(As at 10 March 1999)

State	*Amount in United States dollars*	*Paid in New York/ Geneva*	*Paid on*
Cyprus	1 000	Geneva	12 May 1998
France	83 333	Geneva	4 November 1998
Ireland	29 600	Geneva	6 November 1998
Japan	50 000	New York	29 January 1999
Kuwait	25 000	Geneva	1 September 1998
South Africa	10 000	Geneva	6 April 1998
Turkey	5 000	Geneva	20 February 1998
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	8 465	Geneva	19 October 1998
Subtotal	**212 398**		

NGOs and individuals	*Amount in United States dollars*	*Paid in New York/ Geneva*	*Paid on*
Mario Aldighieri (Cremona, Italy)	590	Geneva	8 December 1998
Teachers and students at Istituto Tecnico Commerciale Oscar Romero (Albino, Italy)	940	Geneva	3 November 1999
Sadiq M.S. Marafi (Geneva)	565	Geneva	29 December 1998
M.L.A.L. Movimiento Laici (Verona, Italy)	676	Geneva	8 September 1998
Operazione Terzo Mondo (Albino, Italy)	379	Geneva	27 October 1998
Yorio Shiokawa (Aichi-Ken, Japan)	2 000	Geneva	19 October 1998
Halima Embarek Warzazi (Geneva)	2 027	Geneva	21 September 1998
Subtotal	**7 680**		
Grand total	**220 078**		

VI. Appeal by the Commission on Human Rights

14. At its fifty-fifth session, the Commission on Human Rights, under its agenda item on vulnerable groups and individuals, had before it a note by the Secretariat supplementing and updating, as at 16 December 1998, the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.[5]

15. In its resolution 1999/46 of 27 April 1999, on "Contemporary forms of slavery", the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General to transmit to Governments an appeal for contributions to the Fund.

VII. Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

16. Prior to the meeting of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Anti-Slavery International, the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, the International Human Rights Law Group and the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism organized an NGO consultation, entitled "Trafficking and the global sex industry: the need for a human rights framework", at the Palais des Nations, in Geneva (21 and 22 June 1999). The organizers invited the beneficiaries of travel grants from the Fund who work in the field of trafficking to participate in the consultation. Swami Agnivesh, Chairperson of the Board, and Theo van Boven, member of the Board, also participated in the consultation.

17. Two members of the Board, the Chairperson and Tatiana Matveeva, participated in the twenty-fourth session of the Working Group at their own expense, as recommended by the Subcommission in its resolution 1998/20 (see para. 7 above). Under the agenda item on the activities of the Fund, they introduced the note by the secretariat containing the recommendations by the Board at its fourth session, which were approved by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and made available to the WorkingGroup.[6] Both members of the Board met with the beneficiaries of travel grants from the Fund attending the Working Group's session. All participants welcomed the presence of these organizations, which brought a practical, human dimension to the work of the Group and enabled it to keep abreast of the current situations. Since they were active in the field and acquainted with the daily reality, the testimony of these organizations

was extremely useful to the Group and the subjects they raised were many and varied.[7]

18. The Chairperson welcomed the tendency within the United Nations to give women and organizations in the field a greater voice and recalled the fundamental role the Fund was playing in that area.[8]

19. Ms. Matveeva thanked the donors and made an appeal to them and to other donors for new and regular contributions to the Fund.

20. The Working Group decided to continue to examine the situation and the activities of the Fund at its twenty-fifth session.

VIII. New resolution of the Subcommission on the Fund

21. When introducing the report of the Working Group under the agenda item on contemporary forms of slavery at the fifty-first session of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights on 16 August 1999, the Chairperson of the Working Group, Halima Embarek Warzazi, mentioned that the 10 representatives of NGOs active in the field financed by the Fund who attended its twenty-fourth session had contributed to a deeper knowledge on the part of the Working Group of varied subjects and that their testimonies were extremely useful to the Group.

22. Several NGOs, including Anti-Slavery International, the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism, International Educational Development and the International Institute for Peace, referred to the assistance provided by the Fund to local organizations and the need to increase the financial support to the Fund.

23. In its resolution 1999/18, of 25 August 1999, on the Fund, the Subcommission, *inter alia*, noted with satisfaction the participation of the representatives of NGOs financed by the Fund and their valuable contribution to the work of the Working Group and encouraged their activities. The Subcommission expressed its satisfaction to the donor Governments, NGOs and individuals, in particular to the new donors, for their valuable contributions and urged all Governments, in particular to the new donors, for their valuable contributions and urged all Governments, NGOs, and other private or public entities and individuals to contribute annually in order to enable the Fund to fulfil its mandate effectively. The Subcommission emphasized the need for contributions to be paid on a regular basis and, if possible, before the end of the current year, to enable the Board of Trustees to recommend grants to assist representatives of organizations to participate in the deliberations of the Working Group at its twenty-fifth session and to finance projects of humanitarian assistance by NGOs in the field. The Subcommission invited members of the Board of Trustees in a position to do so to participate at the twenty-fifth session of the Working Group and decided to continue to examine the situation and the activities of the Fund at its fifty-second session.

IX. Grants approval cycle

24. Applications for travel and project grants have to be submitted for analysis by the secretariat of the Fund at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, in the Support Services Branch, by 30 October 1999. Admissible applications will be examined by the Board of Trustees at its next session, in February 2000. The Board will adopt recommendations for approval by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on behalf of the Secretary-General. The grants should be paid in April and May 2000. Beneficiaries have then to provide satisfactory narrative and financial reports on the use of project grants before 1 December 2000. Until satisfactory reports on the use of previous grants are received, no new grant can be considered.

X. Needs assessment

25. Taking into consideration the fact that requests received in 1999 amounted to about $900,000 (see para. 11 above), in the Board's view, in order to meet at least one third of requests expected to be received in the year 2000, the Fund would need an additional $300,000 in contributions.

26. As at 30 August 1999, the following contributions have been paid and are available for the fifth session of the Board of Trustees, scheduled in February 2000:

Table 2
Contributions available for the fifth session of the Board of Trustees in 2000
(As at 31 August 1999)

State	*Amount in United States dollars*	*Paid in New York/ Geneva*	*Paid on*
France	16 357	Geneva	29 April 1999
Saudi Arabia	10 000	Geneva	22 July 1999
South Africa	7 589	Geneva	7 April 1999

NGOs and individuals	*Amount in United States dollars*	*Paid in New York/ Geneva*	*Paid on*
Operazione Terzo Mondo (Albino, Italy)	1 000.00	Geneva	10 June 1999
Women's World Summit Foundation (Geneva)	2 815.00	Geneva	22 June 1999
Japanese Worker's Committee for Human Rights (Tokyo)	1 000 Swiss francs (official receipt and amount in $ not yet available)	Geneva	24 Aug. 1999
Yorio Shiokawa (Aichi-Ken, Japan)	500 Swiss francs (official receipt and amount in $ not yet available)	Geneva	25 Aug. 1999
Total	**37 761.00**	**(+1 500 SwF)**	

27. The following pledges have been made as at 31 August 1999:

Table 3
Pledges

State	*Amount in United States dollars*	*Paid in New York/ Geneva*	*Paid on*
Ireland	26 386	Geneva	13 July 1999
Poland	5 000	Geneva	19 August 1999
Total	31 386		

XI. Fifth session of the Board of Trustees

28. The Board expressed its gratitude to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, for having sent letters to all States appealing for contributions to the Fund, and recommended that the High Commissioner appeal for new contributions in October 1999 in order to obtain a sufficient amount of money to be able to fulfil its mandate in 2000.

XII. How to contribute to the Fund

29. Voluntary contributions to the Fund can be made by:

(a) **Bank transfer:** to the United Nations Geneva General Fund

- in United States dollars, c/o Chase Manhattan Bank, New York
A/C: 001-1-508629, UNOG General Fund,
G/L: UN-0503456, United States Banking Code: 021000021
- or in Swiss francs, c/o UBS AG,
P.O. Box 2770, CH 1211 Geneva 2,
Acc.240-CO-590-160.0, swift address: UBSWCHZH12A

(b) **Cheque:** to:

- the United Nations Cashier's Office, United Nations, New York, New York 10017, United States of America, or
- the Treasurer, United Nations Office at Geneva, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

30. Please be sure to make payments to the order of the "United Nations" and also to include "for the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Account SH" in the corner of the cheque.

XIII. Additional information

31. For any additional information, please contact the secretariat of the Fund at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Support Services Branch, Trust Fund Unit, CH-1211 Geneva 10: tel. (41-22) 917 91 64 / 917 91 45 / 917 92 66: fax (41-22) 917 90 17; e-mail: eortado-rosich.hchr@unog.ch; dpremont.hchr@unog.ch.

Notes

[1] A/53/339, para. 9.

[2] Ibid., paras. 14-17.

[3] For the list of beneficiaries, see E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.2/1999/4.

[4] E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.2/1997/4.

[5] A/53/339.

[6] E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.2/1999/4 and Add.1.

[7] E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/17, paras. 99 and 100.

[8] Ibid.